

## Co-Occurring Disorders and Problem Gambling

### Case Study

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Matt (aged 38) presented for an evaluation to determine whether he had a problem with gambling of significance. During the evaluation, he completed: An intake form, the SCID-I Questionnaire, the SCID-II Personality Questionnaire, and the SCID-II Interview. Other data included: the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), the Gambler's Attitude and Belief Scales (GABS), Inventory of Gambling Situations (IGS), and a review of the DSM-IV-TR criteria for pathological gambling.

#### History

Matt indicated that he has been gambling since age 14. His gambling increased to a more regular format 13 years ago. However, there was another increase 4-5 years ago in which he gambled virtually all the time. Two years ago, he had a "breakdown" associated with gambling. At that time, he received outpatient treatment including medications.

Matt plays almost exclusively cards, e.g., poker for high stakes with the stakes being anywhere from \$10 to \$100 a bet. He repeatedly informs the counselor that he "is on the wall" in the Atlantic City Casinos, indicating that he is recognized by the casinos as a "professional gambler." He is also fully aware that he has lost a great deal of money gambling and that there is compulsiveness in his gambling style. He estimates that his current debt related to gambling is approximately \$15,000. However, he also indicates that he has lost a car, a boat, and a home due to re-mortgaging and speculates that he really has lost approximately \$100,000 in the last 2 years.

Matt was disabled when he was 25 years old in a vehicular accident. He reports that he hurts daily and that he has never really worked since that time. He lives with his divorced wife, and they get along in a tolerable fashion. He reports that as a young man he did have some issues with alcohol and "speed type" products. He reports that he has not been involved with those drugs or with alcohol for some time.

Matt's presentation in both interviews and on the phone is quite narcissistic and demanding. When he speaks with you, he tells you how good a player he is and how special he is. He also indicates that he has told physicians and other therapists about how to treat him for his gambling problems. Additionally, he indicates that he has little faith in GA because they do not "run in a proper manner." "If I was in charge of GA, I would get professionals in to run the meetings and make them more to the point of gambling."

Matt has seen a physician recently but could not remember the physician's name. He was prescribed Luvox, which appears to be an appropriate medication for the addictive nature of gambling as well as his depression. However, Matt noted that he did not really want to take the medication and has reduced the prescribed amount to half a pill—he stated, "This seems to take the edge off. I want to continue being a risk taker and the medication makes me less of a risk taker, less a competitor, and less of a person."

Matt reports that he expects himself to be very clean, neat, nicely kept, and attractive. When speaking of other people, he describes them as attractive or not attractive. When he talks about women at GA, he refers to them as "pretty young girls."

Matt does not report any familial history of substance abuse, psychiatric disorders, or gambling problems.

Results of the SOGS was 16/20; the GABS was 116 (highest end of persons who think like gamblers); the IGS suggests he gambles because of pleasant feelings. He also is driven by being caught in the cycle of gambling; DSM-TR-IV: 10/10 not better accounted for by manic episodes of manic behavior.

#### Questions:

1. What would you diagnose on Axis I? Axis II?
2. What would you diagnose or rule/out on Axis II (Consider what the SCID-I and II results might be?)
3. What do you hypothesize as Matt's motivation level to change his behavior?
4. What would treatment considerations be for Matt: Problem Gambling? Co-occurring Disorders?
5. What will focus of treatment be? How?
6. How will you experience Matt? (personality, gender, cultural, other?)